Concept note

Title: Learning Outcomes

Time: June 26 – 1:30- 2:40 pm

Venue: (Room) Auditorium

Summary:

Education is a catalyst for sustainable development, but for the benefits to accrue, all girls and boys must not only have access to school; they must also be *learning.* There is a global learning crisis hitting the poorest and most marginalized children the hardest, whereby the EFA GMR estimates that more than 250 million children are not able to read, write or count well enough to meet minimum learning standards, even though approximately half of them have received at least 4 years of schooling.

Measurement, if done well, can play a critical role at many levels in improving education quality and learning. Effective teachers measure learning in the classroom to adjust and individualize instruction. Head teachers, school administrators and school district leaders measure learning to target resources and improve school quality. Many national governments also measure learning to diagnose the overall health of their education systems and develop policies to improve the teaching and learning process and ultimately student learning outcomes. Civil society actors, donors and development agencies use assessments to measure the effectiveness of programming and advocate for effective education policies and practices.

There has been a longstanding and broad-based commitment among the world's education ministers to improving, and hence measuring, learning outcomes. In particular, Goal 6 of Education for All commits world leaders to: "Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that *recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills*". The World We Want Thematic Consultation on Education, recognizing the need for further progress in this area, galvanized the global education community and others around an overarching standalone post-2015 goal focused on "Equitable, Quality Education and Lifelong Learning for All". The latest Education for All Global Monitoring Report calls for a global post-2015 goal of acquiring foundational skills in reading, writing and mathematics for all children and youth by 2030 regardless of their circumstances, which requires countries to strengthen their national assessment systems and ensure that they are used to inform policy. The GMR also points to regional and international assessments as critical for monitoring post-2015 learning goals.

A key input into what should be measured and how is the work of the Learning Metrics Task Force (LMTF), which consulted with nearly 2,000 people, including more than 50 ministers of education, permanent secretaries or their representatives through a broad consultation process. The vast majority of consultation participants, echoing previous commitments to EFA Goal 6, articulated the importance of improving learning outcomes and the role of measurement in helping to inform actors, from teachers to ministers, about the efficacy of their interventions. Ultimately, the task force weighed a wide range of (often conflicting) input and after much debate came to agreement on a series of recommendations, offering a hybrid approach to measuring learning with a broad range of competencies across seven domains that are

important for all children and youth and should be measured at the national level and a smaller set of indicator areas for global tracking.

The speakers in this panel will provide an overview of how learning outcomes are measured currently and how they use results in their countries and organizations. They will make recommendations for what is needed at both country and global levels to improve learning and track progress.

- **Where are we today on learning?** What do we know about how children and youth are learning at the national, regional and international levels? What are the knowledge gaps with regard to learning?

- **What is the role of learning assessment in improving learning both at the classroom and system level?** How can governments and non-governmental actors ensure that data from learning assessments is used to actually improve learning? How can we mitigate the unintended consequences of measuring learning (e.g. narrowing the curriculum to cover only what is assessed or putting undue pressure on students and teachers)?

- **How do we ensure there is national capacity for measuring and ultimately improving learning?** How can countries particularly the poorest improve capacity for measuring learning in a way that is driven by national priorities? What support can international and regional actors provide to ensure that no country, even the poorest, is left behind?

- **How can we incentivize open-source and accessible tools for learning assessment?** Can we make some assessments open-source and freely available? What are the benefits and drawbacks of this approach to?

Objectives:

- Contribute to the global debate on learning outcomes and learning assessment

Expected outcomes:

- Greater awareness about the learning crisis, both what we know and the data gaps
- Better understanding of the conditions in which learning assessment can improve learning
- Greater focus on and mobilization of GPE partners around support to national learning assessment systems and policies to use data to improve learning.

Speakers:

Moderator: Rebecca Winthrop, Senior Fellow and Director, Center for Universal Education at the Brookings Institution

Proposed panelists:

1- Pauline Rose, Professor of International Education at Cambridge University, former Director of the EFA Global Monitoring Report
2- Julia Gillard, GPE Chair and Nonresident Fellow at the Center for Universal Education
3- Elizabeth King, Director, Education; Acting Vice President, Human Development Network; World Bank
4- Eric Postel, Assistant Administrator, USAID

5- David Edwards, Deputy General Secretary, Education International
6- Dzingai Mutumbuka, Chair, Association for the Development of Education in Africa
7- Serigne Mbaye Thiam, Minister of Education, Senegal
8- David Crone, Plan UK

Format: plenary-style panel, Q&A